

# Analyzing and discussing primary and secondary source documents

[History](#)



Calhoun supports the claim that slavery is patriarchal and leaves slaves better off than northern “wage slaves” by explaining how the white men direct the labor of slaves to result in the benefit of all, and how the slaveholders care for their slaves into old age by giving them assistance and provisions that they would otherwise lack. He also explains how there is a harmony between the races, as the paternal whites bring physical, intellectual, and moral benefit to the slaves that they watch over. I would respond to this claim by showing how the worker in the north is able to achieve the very same by choice of employment, and has more intellectual, moral, and physical benefit by being able to have a say in their field of work and in where they live. They also are able to pursue education to a much higher standard than most southern slaves would ever be allowed, and have a set of morals that is embraced by them rather than imposed on them. Despite any benefits that Calhoun may claim, I would argue that they are inherently harmful if they are imposed within the relationship of owner and slave rather than teacher and student or employer and employee. Southerners who were not part of the “Plantation Aristocracy” still supported slavery because it was a cornerstone of their overall economic system. Without slavery, the southern economy would have to undergo massive hardship and reform, and a new system would require a much larger portion of the white population to work. These people felt that slavery was a basic part of their culture, as well, and defended slavery as a right. Furthermore, the institution of slavery gave southerners greater political power per capita, and thus their votes in Congress were represented more strongly without the input—but with the population strength—of their slaves. Slavery had an

effect on every piece of the economic system of the south, as slaveholders had more money to spend because they were able to run their plantations using unpaid labor. This money went into the economy that supported all southerners in their own businesses and endeavors, and a lack of such wealth would lead to a lower amount of disposable income in the entire region. Furthermore, these southerners did not have the moral opposition to slavery that many northerners felt. The lack of abolitionist thought in their religious and moral views led to them being more passively supportive of slavery. Finally, many saw abolition as a northern movement to control the south more directly. This was an expansion of federal power that would impede on the rights of the southern states to make their own laws. They feared this would lead to a sort of tyranny of the north, where southern values as a whole could be forced to change and adapt to northern standards by force. Slavery represented one aspect of southern autonomy, and its end would leave southerners feeling less autonomous and, as Calhoun had put it, in a state of slavery themselves in respect to northern political opinions.

The slave trade was much easier to end than slavery itself because it was a larger institution that could be easily modified by the federal government. The banning of the importation of slaves had been put in effect decades before the Civil War, and even before the 1800s the plan was made to outlaw this activity. Ending the slave trade simply ended importing new slaves, but to end slavery itself would require much greater interference in the economy and politics of the south. Southerners had a great amount of investment and attachment to slavery itself, and thus it would not be as

simple as passing a law that banned slavery. In addition, to end slavery would require a plan for how to deal with the large influx of freed slaves into the population—it would have to be decided how they would vote, where they would live, and other political issues. Finally, the effects of a sudden end to slavery on southern commerce and agriculture could be devastating, and it was very difficult to come up with any plan that southerners would agree to, because any such movement would have no conceivable benefits for them.